

[Mr. and Mrs. Edward D. Miller]

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Folkstuff - Rangelore

Range-lore

Ruby Mosley

San Angelo, Texas.

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RANGE-LORE

Mr. and Mrs. Edward D. Miller of San Angelo, Texas, have owned and operated ranches as large as a hundred sections at one time.

Mr. Miller herded sheep for John and Don Berry when he was a young man; later he returned and bought the whole outfit.

They gave the town site for Millersview, which carries their name.

Ab Blocker was o close friend and spent the night with them several times.

"The first outstanding thing that I remember, was when our house washed away," says Mrs. Edward D. Miller.

"When I was a little girl about 9 years old, we lived in Bell County, near the Lampasas River. One C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 night in August, the river got on a rise, it began swelling wider and getting wilder. My father went out about every thirty minutes to watch the high water marks. This time he came in a run saying, "We must get these kids out of

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here.' We three older children each got a smaller one on our backs and started to higher ground. As we passed the barn brother took the rails down, so the cattle, hogs, and horses could get out. Before we got to the hill we had to cross a low place where the water was up around brother's neck; we smaller kids clutched him by his suspenders and he pulled us on across. Each one got a ducking or two before we reached the other side. It's still a puzzle to me how those babies hung to our backs while we were hanging to brother through that deep, swift water. Father and mother stayed behind to put the household furnishings up in the loft. When they came by the lot a rail had washed across the gate and all the stock was swimming around. Father let them free but we never knew what became of them. Father had four quilts and mother had a grease lamp. When they got to the low place the water was up to father's neck and mother had to hang on to him. Father was over six feet tall so he held the quilts up out of the water and mother saved the lamp. The next day, we went over to the ruins and picked up as many of the household goods as we could find, and put them 3 in trees to dry out. Oh yes, about our house, it was washed away, all except the roof and that was top side down in a big tree with a bundle of fresh washed clothes that were not even wet. We went back to our quilts and grease lamp to spend the night and another flood came that very night and cleaned the place of every thing we had saved. Our bread for the next year was made from unearthed corn, which was dark and musty but was all we had.

"About five miles below as Mrs. Hulsey went down to the river to wash greens (we all did in those days). A roll of water come before she knew what it was all about and washed greens, pan, and every thing on down the river. She pulled herself out, by first one little bush then another.

"When we lived in Coleman County a bunch of Indians come through and made a raid on horses. My brother-in-law Tom Elkins, went with the gang to try to get the horses back. When he returned he said, 'The nearest we got to 'em was when we found blood on the cobs.' The Indians had eaten fresh corn off the cob and their gums had bled on the cobs.

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"My mother and I stayed day and night shifts with Mrs. Louis Winkler when she had a new baby at her house. She told me about the Indians capturing her two brothers. They lived at Loyal Valley, Mason County, when Mrs. Louie Winkler was Mattie Boofmier; she had two brothers, Willie, 4 age 5 years, and Herman 9 years. One day they went to the spring to get water for the household use. The Indians swooped down and carried the two youngsters for a ride. That night the pair was put to bed with Indians on all sides. Poor little Willie wiggled inch by inch until he made his escape. The poor little fellow was found early the next morning by a man who had gone to drive the calves in at milking time. Willie was frozen stiff but the kind man carried him in while his wife gave him food and warmth. The man set out to carry the glad news to the parents and searchers.

"Herman was carried on and on, made the raids and lived the rough, roaming life with the Indians until he was grown. The government bought him from the Indians when they were placed on reservation.

"Herman's parents got word that their boy was safe and would be returned; well, they killed the fatted calf, tidied up the guest room and had a big feather bed ready for his first real night's sleep since he had been captured. Poor Herman wasn't any longer mother's little knee pants boy but was a brawny young man, speaking the Indian language much better than English. The next morning about 4 o'clock Herman was walking out in the yard and when questioned he told them it was too stuffy inside and he never wanted to sleep on another feather bed.

"Mrs. Brunson told us the story of her family being attacked by the redskins, over in McCulloch County. Mrs. 5 Brunson was a girl about 16, had a sister 14, a mother father, brother, and baby brother.

"One time the father loaded them all in a wagon and headed for Fort Worth to get supplies for the next few months. It took several days to make the trip so they carried beds, food, and all necessary things. They had good luck on the way and looked the town over, and

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bought supplies, but on the way home were halted by Indians. The great tribe hit like a storm, cut the team free from the wagon, and man-handled the father and brother. In the terrible fight both were killed. Next they ripped the sacks of six hundred pounds of flour, threw it mad man style into the air, and their big feather bed was treated likewise. The wagon and remains were burned in a heap, right in front of the remaining family. The mother was tied on a wild mule with baby in arms, while the two sisters were tied on another mule not knowing what would be the outcome. God must have been with them as the mules didn't pitch.

"When night came the Indians would put a blanket on the ground and place the four captives in a row with another blanket over them; an Indian would lay one on each side and one at the foot and another at their head. There wasn't a possible chance of escape.

"One night as they were riding along, the girl, (now Mrs. Brunson) could see Mrs. A. J. Walker spinning 6 as they passed the house. What torture, knowing if a scream was made, death would be next. They rode day in and day out, until they got so far from settlements the Indians did not tie them on the mules any longer. The baby was hungry and thirsty but the Indians would not let them stop for water. They hated the baby because it cried. They went on for miles and miles with the baby still crying for water. The girl (Mrs. Brunson) pulled her shoe off and dipped some water from a muddy stream as they went through and gave the starving baby a drink. The Indians saw them as the baby was getting the last swallow and beat the girl until she could hardly sit on the horse, then played catch with the baby from one horse to the other, sometimes letting it fall to the ground. When they threw it to the mother or sisters they were forced to throw it back to them. This routine was continued until the poor little baby was almost dead. The cruel hearted chief with his strong arm sent the child as far into the sky as his ability would allow, then with his keen eye and clever hand clutching a long bladed knife held it in place for the baby to land on. The knife went through the child, causing its death. They tossed the baby aside and gaily went on their journey with the broken hearted captives. In a few days they came to some wigwams and the mother and 14 year old daughter were left there. The 7 girl (now Mrs.

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Brunson) was carried on and on for several days when they came to another tribe. The girl was turned over to an old squaw. The old squaw was very cruel to the girl, making her carry heavy tubs of water on her head which almost broke her neck, and beating her unmercifully. She had worn out all of her clothing except an old shimmy (a long straight slip), and one day while the old squaw was guarding her she beat her so severely that it brought on a condition which the chief observed by the soiled places on the old shinny. When he saw what the punishment had caused he got a blanket and tied it around the girl to hide the soiled clothing and then beat the old squaw even more severely. The chief took more interest in his captive and life was a little better than death so she tried to content herself. She had been with them so long she didn't try to escape as she had no place to go. It was safer with them than to wander out into the wilds only to be devoured by animals.

"The government had heard of the girl and told the chief that they wanted to buy her. When the day came for General Mackenzie to come, the chief had her dressed in the best blanket.

"Soon General Mackenzie arrived with her mother and sister to give them their freedom. Their joys and sorrows were shared together for many years." Range-lore

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mrs. Edward D. Miller, San Angelo, Texas interviewed, February 3, 1938.